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WEST GERMAN MAGAZINE SAYS KLAUS BARBIE WAS IN BOLIVIAN SECRET SERVICE
HAMBURG, GERMANY

Klaus Barbie, the notorious Nazi known as the 'Butcher of Lyon,' directed political torture as a postwar Bolivian secret service colonel and kept ties with U.S. intelligence, a news magazine reported Wednesday.

The former Gestapo officer, who went by the name of Klaus Altmann Hansen in his postwar guise as a Bolivian businessman, also frequently visited West Germany and the United States before he was extradited to France last year, the Hamburg-based Stern weekly said.

The startling revelations about Barbie's postwar career were developed in exhaustive research by a magazine reporting staff, deputy Stern editor Dieter Guett told a news conference. The conference was timed to coincide with the appearance of the first of a series of articles exposing the truth about Barbie's 32-year Latin American sojourn.

Convicted in absentia of mass murders while he was the Nazi secret police chief in Lyon during World War II, Barbie, 70, was extradited in early 1983 toward the end of Bolivia's now defunct military regime. He has been in French custody ever since.

The Stern series includes a photograph of Barbie's Bolivian military identity card as a lieutenant colonel, complete with a snapshot of the bearer in uniform.

The magazine said Barbie went directly from the Gestapo to U.S. intelligence after the war. The CIA set Barbie up in Bolivia in 1951, three years after French secret agents and prosecutors picked up his trail in the American sector of conquered Germany.

German prosecutors learned of Barbie's whereabouts as early as 1961 but terminated their probe when they discovered Barbie's CIA and German intelligence connections.

Stern said Barbie paid the last of many postwar visits to West Germany in November 1981 to recruit mercenaries for his Bolivian paramilitary commandoes.

The article said Barbie was responsible for planning numerous military coups in Bolivia, introducing political torture and personally ordered mass murders.

'In the 1980 coup that established the brutal regime under Gen. Meza that was linked to the cocaine Mafia, he directed not only strategy but the political planning,' the first article said.

It said Barbie had eight members of the social-democratic MIR Party leadership shot at a meeting in 1981. An accompanying photograph showed the grisly scene of the alleged July 17, 1980 slaying by Barbie's paramilitary units of the noted author Quiroga Santa Cruz, the popular social democratic leader.

Barbie was security advisor to the Barrientos dictatorship in La Paz and had a hand in the 1967 manhunt and subsequent murder of guerrilla chieftan Che Guevara, Stern reported.